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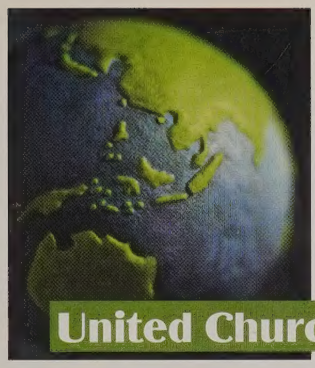

whole Earth

newsletter
United Church Board for World Ministries

GLOBAL MINISTRIES

A common witness of the Division of Overseas Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church Board for World Ministries, United Church of Christ

"Mutually Encouraged by Each Others' Faith"

Global Ministries missionaries find their faith deepened as they relate to Christians and non-Christians wherever they are. Three reflections here from the Middle East provide new ways to look at death and resurrection during this Lenten season.

Bread and Salt Between Us
by Marla Schrader, Missionary in Palestine

In Paul's letter to the Romans, we are reminded to employ our spiritual gifts not just to strengthen others, but, more precisely, in order that we might be "mutually encouraged by each other's faith." (Romans 1:11-12)

It is in this spirit that the Palestinian Christian community's 2000th celebration of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ this year has encouraged my faith. Despite the enormous hardship suffered during the past fifty-two years of military occupation, Palestinians still hold fast to hope, freedom and resurrection. They still know God to be with them from beginning to end and that, ultimately, justice will prevail.

Even the culture and language of the Palestinian people reflect their steadfast and enduring faith. It permeates life, so that almost all common expressions in Arabic refer to the peace and grace of God. "Hello" becomes "May God's grace and peace be with you."

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World Mission Leader David M. Stowe Dies

Dr. David M. Stowe died January 10, 2000, in Englewood, NJ, at the age of 80. The cause of death was cancer. A memorial service was held February 12.

Dr. Stowe was a missionary with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Beijing, China, with his wife Virginia, when they were forced out in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War. After completing doctoral studies at Pacific School of Religion, he became Education Secretary for the American Board in Boston in 1956. He taught at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon for a year before becoming Executive Secretary of the Division of Foreign Mission for the National Council of Churches in 1963. In 1965 he became Associate General Secretary.

In 1970, Dr. Stowe was elected Executive Vice President of the United Church Board for World Ministries, where he served until his retirement in 1985. Under his leadership it became board policy that no missionary would serve overseas without being invited by the indigenous partner church. He also believed that mission is a two-way street; under his leadership, Christians from other countries were invited to come to the United States to share their understanding and experience of the Gospel with U.S. church members. Both of these ideas are now standard procedures in mainline missions boards in the United States. Dr. Stowe also contributed to the emerging discussion of interfaith relations with his insightful book *When Faith Meets Faith.*

The struggle against apartheid in South Africa, where the UCBWM had worked since the 1890's, led Stowe to hire one of the country's first executives to work with top management of major corporations in an effort to persuade them to be good corporate citizens. Thus was born the corporate social responsibility movement, which today is embraced by many faith groups and other non-profit groups.

Following retirement in 1985, Dr. Stowe served as archivist for the UCBWM and continued his research into the history of the ABCFM. The David Stowe Missions Fund has been established in his honor.◆

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SAMUEL MILLS SOCIETY HONORS

Joyce (Mrs. Thomas) Allen's deep commitment to the mission of the church and the work of the Board for World Ministries was recognized as she and her husband were named to the Samuel J. Mills Society. Joyce photographed with Dale Bishop.

At the 190th Annual Meeting of the Board for World Ministries, Executive Vice President Dale L. Bishop received the following new members into the Samuel J. Mills Society: Mr. & Mrs. Thomas D. Allen, Chicago, IL; the Rev. John & Mrs. Alice Byers, Grand Blanc, MI; Ward Hartman, Upper Sandusky, OH; Ruth McClintock Henderson, Edmonton, Alberta; Mr. & Mrs. Paul Nilson, Columbia, NJ; Helen B. Parsons, Amherst, MA; Dr. & Mrs. Robert Russell, Hanover, NH; and Dawn & Lynn Salier, Arlington Heights, IL.

The Society honors those who have made significant contributions to the work of the Board over the years. It takes its name from Samuel J. Mills, who, with four other students at Williams College, Williamstown, MA, made a commitment to service overseas at what came to be known as the "Haystack Prayer Meeting." Their commitment led to the creation in 1810 of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a predecessor of the Board for World Ministries. ◆

For further information about the Mills Society and the making of gifts for the work of the Board, contact Dr. Bishop, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 736-3202. [bishopd@ucc.org]

Global Partners Provide Challenges

"engaging in interfaith dialogue does not dilute one's own faith, but rather causes one to examine one's faith."

Two of the six global partner members of the Common Global Ministries Board completed their terms at the November 1999 meeting. They offered observations and reflections on their participation over the last two years. Jurgen Kanz, Germany, challenged the Board to consider more representation from partners if the Board is serious about their input so that their numbers might give them more influence on decisions.

The Rev. Sam Amirtham, India, highlighted the importance of interfaith dialogue in the years to come, 1) to help churches understand that engaging in interfaith dialogue does not dilute one's own faith, but rather causes one to examine one's faith, 2) theologically it is the important issue for the coming decades because of the issues it raises about our understanding of God, of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and 3) it is the way forward for the global community.

The Board also heard from the Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour, Executive Director of the Middle East Council of Churches, and Rose Angela Jarjour, General Secretary of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches. They described how Christians in the Middle East live in anxiety and hope. They are concerned about Christians leaving the land of Christ's birth, emigrating to the West in search of safety and a better future. Among the issues affecting this minority community are questions of citizenship and equal rights. Even so, they live in the hope that they can be, as Christians everywhere are called to be, salt and light and yeast. ◆

Heart Disease Claims Indian Doctor, Mabelle Arole

"Mabelle and Raj vowed to devote their lives to the cause of the poor."

Dr. Mabelle Arole died September 27, 1999. She had suffered from myocarditis for the last three years and finally developed cardiomyopathy.

Dr. Arole and her husband, Dr. Rajanikant Arole, are known to many of our readers for their pioneering rural health care ministry in Jamkhed, India. Both studied medicine at Christian Medical College in Vellore, India, and she was named Best Outgoing Student. At their marriage, Mabelle and Raj vowed to devote their lives to the cause of the poor. Their wedding rings were engraved, "Each for other; both for God."

They went to the U.S., where Dr. Mabelle did her residency in internal medicine and cardiology and Dr. Raj did surgery. Both received their Masters of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD. On returning to India, they founded the Comprehensive Rural Health Project (CRHP) in Jamkhed, which has served as a model world-wide. Dr. Mabelle's work in empowering women and communities "stands as a witness to believing in the potential of humankind and bringing out the 'image of God' in every person," as her daughter Shobha wrote.

Dr. Mabelle is survived by her husband Raj, daughter Shobha, son Ravi and his wife Manisha, and their daughter Nisha. The family is starting a foundation, known as the Jamkhed International Foundation, as well as a Memorial Fund, in memory of Dr. Mabelle Arole. It will be used to help empower destitute women, especially those who are widowed or separated from their husbands, and also women with chronic illnesses like HIV AIDs, tuberculosis and leprosy.

For further information about the memorial fund, contact the Global Ministries Southern Asia Office, 475 Riverside Drive, 16th floor, New York, NY 10115; regarding the foundation, please contact Connie Gates, e-mail: connie-gates.parti@ecunet.org or Ravi Arole, e-mail: raviarole@att.net

Continuing the *Missionary Herald* founded in 1805, *Whole Earth Newsletter* is published twice a year by the United Church Board for World Ministries, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115, whose work is made possible by financial support of Our Church's Wider Mission of the United Church of Christ. No reproduction or usage restrictions. Editor, Sandra J. Rooney; Common Global Ministries copy co-edited with Marianne Collar.

Medical Supplies Help those in Need

Story submitted by Eilene Kruse, St. John's UCC, Ackley, IA

Several years ago, while serving on the United Church Board for World Ministries, I learned about Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA), a non-profit organization which provides essential products and services for emergency health and development programs around the world. All the medical supplies and medicines are donated and shipped overseas to clinics and hospitals in more than 60 developing countries.

In the past, I had taken small amounts of medical supplies along on medical mission work trips, but here was an opportunity to collect larger quantities for an organization in partnership with Global Ministries.

Shipping and purchase costs are paid by St. John's UCC through donations in the "Pennies for People" jar. Volunteers from the Mission Committee help to label and pack the supplies and then they are sent to IMA, where volunteers package them for shipment overseas.

IMA figured our first shipment, sent in 1996, was valued at $7,155.65. Since we began this mission effort, we have spent approximately $1500 on supplies and shipping—a small price to pay for all the usable goods sent.

Supplies that cannot be accepted by IMA have been accepted by the House of Mercy in Des Moines, a mission which serves homeless women and children. Some were also sent through the Red Cross to Budyennovsk, Russia, when part of the hospital there was damaged by bombs, and to El Salvador for earthquake relief. This is an on-going mission of St. John's UCC.◆

Give the Gift of Health by providing Medicine Boxes for shipment overseas to health clinics, hospitals, or disaster response efforts. To request more information contact:

UCC Office for Global Sharing of Resources
(212) 870-2283, email: petrucel@ucc.org
Disciples Week of Compassion
(317) 635-3100, email: johnnywray.parti@ecunet.org

Working together ecumenically around the world

Story submitted by the First Christian Church in Madison, IN

First Christian Church in Madison, along with the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Baptist Churches, supported an ecumenical project called the Ulster Project. In 1973, an Anglican priest from Ireland was asked to formulate a plan to help ease tensions in Northern Ireland. There are now twenty-five such projects in the U.S. implementing ministry together between Catholic and Protestants in the U.S. and Northern Ireland. The Ulster Project is dedicated to promoting a healthy relationship between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland by building tolerance, trust, and and ongoing positive relationship among potential leaders from these two Christian traditions.

First Christian Church hosted twelve Northern Ireland teenagers and two chaperones from Roman Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. The group lived and worshipped together, along with engaging in a program aimed at helping them deal with emotions, prejudices, and spiritual issues that keep them apart.

"We are showing they can live and work together, even when they have problems," said Darlene Thompson, president of the Ulster Project. ◆

For a listing of special project opportunities or ways your congregation can get involved in global projects like these, please email dom@disciples.org

Members of the First Christian Church in Madison, IN, and participants from Northern Ireland's Ulster Project

Send us your "We Did It" story

What is the secret to exciting events that lift up our global ministries work? We are looking for fresh, unique approaches to telling the mission story. Tell us what has worked in your church. In each newsletter, we will publish the best ideas sent to us. So put on your thinking cap and sort through the photos from your last mission event. To be considered for publication, send us a note describing the event, who took part, when it took place, an how it was received in your group. Pictures are especially helpful. Send stories and photos to "We Did It," c/o Global Ministries, Director of Communications, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

GLOBAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

The following excerpt comes from GEAR, Global Education and Advocacy Resource. It is produced by the Global Ministries Global Education and Advocacy staff team. The current issue of GEAR is devoted to aging. For a complimentary copy of GEAR, see page 12 for details.

"Older persons are still valued in most African communities."

Growing Older in Africa

Traditionally, in African communities, people have looked forward to becoming elderly. Being elderly conferred a number of things on a person: respect, the right to advise traditional political leaders, and the right to become decision-makers for their extended families. How this happens differs from community to community, tribe to tribe, and country to country. One cannot generalize about this in a continent as large and diverse as Africa. However, the respect and ascription of wisdom to the elderly in Africa seems to be widespread. In recent years this has been affected by culture contact, economic realities, and other factors brought on by modernity.

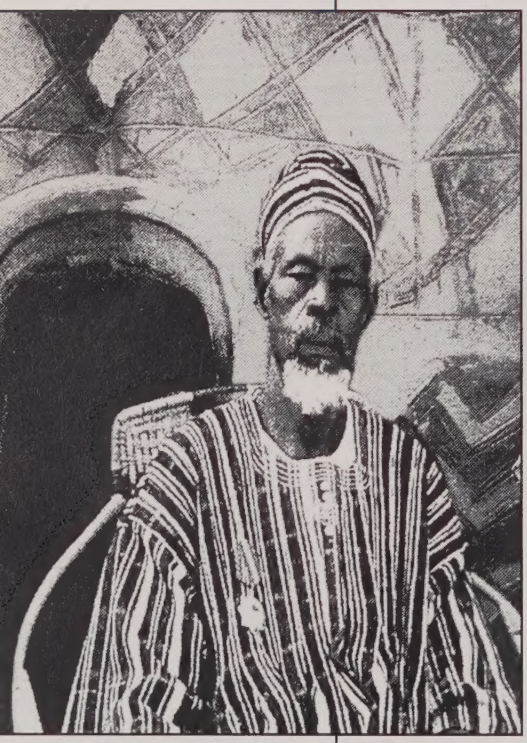


Image created by Gary Hoff

Older persons are still valued in most African communities. They are respected as persons whose experience in life can become a resource of wisdom for younger people. The value placed on older people is traditionally linked with the value of the extended family. Africans often value cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents as very close relatives. Thus, as a person grows older, his or her children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, etc. deem it their responsibility to take care of them and to benefit from their words of wisdom. It is the unquestioned duty of the younger generation to send part of their earnings to their elderly parents or grandparents. The elderly, in turn, continue to give advice, and offer words of wisdom with which the younger children can be guided.

In many African cultures, this is changing. Now, many more young and middle-aged people live in cities while their parents and grandparents live in the villages. This is further complicated by the current economic crises facing many African countries. Many find it difficult to cater to their nuclear families with their monthly earnings, let alone send money to their hometowns for their aging parents and grandparents. Many are not able to take their families to their hometowns. Thus, a large number of children are growing up without learning from the wisdom of older generations.

With other cultural contacts and the influence of foreign media, young people are taking their values from sources which often devalue older persons. Formal education equips many people at a young age to do many things which the elderly were not able to do. This often gives some younger people the feeling that they know more than the elderly. These are some of the modern factors which have influenced the lives of elderly persons and how they are treated in society. However, even this trend has not affected the responsibility that children and grandchildren feel towards their elderly relatives. They mostly take care of them in their own homes until their death.

In spite of the effects of modern challenges, older people remain the custodians of community wisdom. Even today, they are relied on for leadership in rites connected with birth, puberty, marriage and death. In any family gathering, especially around these important rites of passage, it is the older persons who preside. For major community decisions, the head of the family (usually the oldest person alive in a number of generations) is the most respected person. Thus the elderly have a very important role to play in African communities. Even in church, the elderly are relied upon for wisdom in decision-making by local church governing bodies. Where the elderly know their limitations or have embraced some of the effects of modernity, they have found new roles of accompanying younger generations in their quest for meaning in life.

In Africa, the elderly have many challenges, but on the whole, the persistence of tradition has made aging something that the community appreciates and values.◆

Excerpts from an article written by The Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, a Ghanaian theologian, who is currently a senior executive staff member of the All Africa Conference of Churches headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. He is in charge of the Theology, Education and Family Life Desk. He has recently been named General Secretary-elect of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, an office he will assume in the Spring of 2000.

The Earthquake Didn't Beat Them

Leslie Nettleton, an English teacher who left Turkey before the earthquake, returned for a visit at Christmas. Here is a portion of her reflection after visiting three tent "cities" at Duzce, one of the areas most affected by the earthquake. She accompanied the project coordinator for TACT (Turkish Action by Churches Together).

Thousands of people dead, thousands of people missing, and tens of thousands of people homeless. This is the way the media portrays news of disaster, such as the earthquakes that struck Turkey in August and November 1999. Grim statistics and photographs of rubble and grief stricken people appear on the front pages of newspapers worldwide for three or four days, then they gradually move to the back pages, until they finally disappear from view altogether. . . . People forget, and lives go on.

The people immediately impacted by these disasters, however, do not have the luxury of forgetting. Their lives are forever changed. They adapt and persevere, and even thrive, but every action in their daily lives serves as a reminder of what happened to them.

For the most part, the tents and conditions were as I expected. What I didn't expect was the way the people had adapted to their new lives. I found the people truly inspirational.

As we approached Duzce, we could already see homemade shelters and haphazard tents set up on streets and in between surviving buildings. Five months after the earthquake, the bulldozers and dump trucks are still at work cleaning up the mess and shifting through the rubble. Prior to the earthquakes, these were once homes, where families lived, ate, slept, laughed, and lent hospitality to visiting strangers. Months later, those who survived still do these things, but in a much altered context.

These first tents I observed didn't appear to be part of an organized tent city. Many looked as if they had been constructed out of whatever materials were available, but people were creating as much normalcy as possible out of this chaos. I saw women cleaning carpets, children kicking a football, and an old man having a shave.

Just outside the city, Leslie visited the first TACT sponsored tent city. Here there was order. Approximately 200 neat, white, octagonal shaped Norwegian tents were lined up in rows. . . . As soon as we got out of the car, we were immediately surrounded by women. They welcomed us and asked us to sit and chat with them. Chairs were quickly procured and soon there was a large group, sitting in a circle and talking. Even though it was Ramadan and they were abstaining from food and drink, they offered us tea and biscuits. We were treated as honored guests. They talked about the earthquakes and the people they had lost. They expressed gratitude towards the people who had helped them, and they talked of normal things. They were sincerely glad to have us there, and proud to show us their tent city. After tea, they showed us the day care, the kitchen, and the cafeteria. While much has been lost and much is still needed, what they have is well cared for and the object of obvious pride. The day care was closed, but through the window I could see brightly colored rugs, children's pictures, and toys neatly lined up. The cafeteria was busy, with workers peeling bags of potatoes for the evening meal. The dining area was also alive with women and girls, slicing tomatoes for salads. Wherever we stopped, we were welcomed and greeted, and treated with courtesy and friendship. I later learned that for the first half-hour, none of those women knew who we were. They were just being friendly. They had no idea that we were with the organization that had helped supply their tents. When they found out who we were, they were, if possible, even more friendly. One woman kept repeating, "As long as I'm alive, I will pray for, and I will never forget, all those people who helped us."

The second tent city has a different look to it. The dark, tunnel shaped Turkish tents are big and sturdy. Several families have used scrap lumber to reinforce and personalize their homes. One family had an orange tree and a lemon tree in a little pot outside their front door. Where some of the Norwegian tents had been damaged by the wind, the Turkish tents looked solid.

Again, we were welcomed and offered tea. Again, we saw the day care and the food tents. Again, we were invited to share a meal.

The third city gave us an opportunity to see the building in action. Eighty Turkish tents had arrived the day before, and already twenty-nine had been built. People were beginning to move in, and we were invited to look inside. We removed our shoes, and went in. Everything was clean and well organized. The blankets were neatly stacked on the pallet beds. The floor had been swept clean. The small box table had a bowl of steaming rice, ready for Iftar consumption (the evening fast breaking). We were definitely aware of the idea that we were in a home, with all of the culture and dignity and pride that would exist in a regular home.

Many of these people have lost everything--family, friends, and possessions. But they have not been beaten. They still live, eat, sleep, laugh, and lend their hospitality to visiting strangers. The earthquakes didn't beat them.◆

"As long as I am alive, I will pray for and I will never forget all those people who helped us."

GLOBAL RESOURCE

"A Day in the Life" is a new resource for your youth group. This fou unit resource will enable UCC and Disciples youth to experience something o what life is like for youth in other parts of the world—their struggle and difficulties, and also their joy and faith. It can be used for a weekend retreat, a four-night Spring break study series, or a monthly Sunday evening program. See page 12 for ordering information.

Thirty-six persons receive missionary appointments to serve in Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, Europe, and Southern Asia.

Global Missionaries Appointed

REGULARLY APPOINTED MISSIONARIES

JIM and SACHA AMEN-ELLIOTT-El Salvador
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod. Jim will work at Guillermo Ungo Village and be an advisor to the Bishop and the church on environmental issues. Sacha will work in the church's ministry of solidarity with street people.

ANGELA BALFOUR-South Africa
Appointed to serve a three-year term as the assistant to the General Secretary of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

ERIKA BOTHA-Japan
Appointed to serve a two-year term with the Council on Cooperative Mission in Japan. Her ministry will be to teach English.

KAREN CAMPBELL-NELSON-Indonesia
Appointed to serve a two-year term with Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor. She will be part of the theological faculty of Artha Wacana University's Center for Regional Studies.

LOIS FERGUSON-Lesotho
Appointed to serve a three-year term with the Christian Health Association of Lesotho. She will work with community health programs.

LYDIA JOHNSON-HILL-New Zealand
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. She will serve as a faculty member relating to counseling, extension, and ministry programs of the Pacific People.

SUNNY and SHEELA KURUVILLA-Lesotho
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the Christian Council of Lesotho. Sunny will work as a financial consultant and Sheela will serve as a math and science teacher.

CORALYN MEDYESY-Hungary
Appointed to serve a two-year term with Karoli Reformed University in Hungary. She will teach pastoral counseling courses, English conversation classes, and be involved in the preparation of future teachers in church-related schools.

ARTHUR and MAPUKA MEHAFFEY-Congo (Zaire) and Congo (Brazzaville)
Appointed to serve a three-year term with the Disciples of Christ in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. Art will work in theological, educational, health, and logistical support services. Mapuka will work in community education.

CARLA METTLING-Lebanon
Appointed to serve a three-year term with the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. She will be working as a professor of English at Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

ALAN and SALLY MCCAIN-Turkey
Appointed to serve a four-year term in Turkey. Alan will work as an administrative officer and Sally will work with women and community relations.

JIM and SACHA AMEN-ELLIOTT
El Salvador

ANGEL RIVERA-AGOS
JOAN FIGUEROA-RIVE
Ecuador

DAVID and ROXI OWEN-Lesotho
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the Lesotho Evangelical Church. David will work as a project officer for LEC in Maseru. He will also be a Global Ministries Field Representative. Roxi will work as an education consultant.

DONALD PERSONS-Thailand
Appointed to serve a four-year term in Thailand. He will work in lay training and evangelism programs.

ANGEL RIVERA-AGOSTO and JOAN FIGUEROA-RIVERA-Ecuador
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the Latin America Council of Churches (CLAI). Angel will work as the program assistant for CLAI's General Assembly, implementation for the Jubilee 2000 campaign, and youth work. Joan will work as the program assistant for communication and women's work.

ALISON STENDAHL-Turkey
Appointed to serve a four-year term with the Near East Mission in Turkey. She will serve as head of the math department at the Uskudar American Aademy and developer of the church history program at Bithynia Bible College.

KARL and JANIS WHITEMAN-Pacific Islands
Appointed to a three-year term in the Pacific Islands. Karl will be the liaison pastor for the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, train pastors for the UCC of Pohnpei, assist in the reopening of Ohwa Christian College in Pohnpei, and as director of continuing education. Jan will work as a secondary school teacher.

ELAINE WRIGHT-Japan
Appointed to serve a three-year term with the Council on Cooperative Mission in Japan. She will work as an English teacher.

LONG TERM VOLUNTEER AND GLOBAL MISSION INTERN APPOINTEES

ELLEN CHANNELS-South Africa, Global Mission Intern
TOM and AVA CLOUGH-Honduras, Volunteers
MARCO GONZALEZ-Honduras, Volunteer
JAN and RUTHANN HALL-South Africa, Volunteers
BARTON HANNA-South Africa, Global Mission Intern
BARBARA MUELLER-Ghana, Volunteer
LEVI ORACION-Philippines, Volunteer
DALE and MARGARET ROSENBERG-Nepal, Volunteers
PHILIP SCHMEHL-Pacific Islands/Micronesia, Volunteer

continued from page 1

"Happy Birthday" becomes "May God grant you peace, health and happiness every year of your life." Arabic proverbs represent major cultural and religious understandings.

Bayna aish wa malah (Between us, there is bread and salt) is a proverb that, for me, has come to illuminate much of the meaning behind one of the disciples' initial encounters with the resurrected Christ. As the Gospel of Luke recounts, "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:35)

The bread symbolizes life and the salt represents all that is good. Through the breaking of bread, the sharing of a meal together, friendship is nurtured and loyalties are established. Gathering together to eat is, however, more than symbolic because it brings people back to the most basic of necessities, sustenance in life. It reminds us that God is present and that we must be too. For if an invitation is extended and you refuse, it is as if you are refusing to be in community.

At the height of the state of Israel's campaign to confiscate the land between Jerusalem and Jericho, friends and I made a solidarity visit to a Bedouin tribe just displaced from their ancestral lands for the second time. One of the families graciously invited us to stay for tea and shared their story with us.

That day, the sweet tea and painful stories became the bread and salt for us. God was made known in the community that was nurtured. Our mutual encouragement of one another, even if for only a few hours, allowed us to more fully embrace life in all its suffering and joy.

How else can we build a global community that cherishes relationships, practices non-violence, respects the environment, and finally realizes that we really do need each other to bring about the peace and justice for which we all long? Now that there is bread and salt between us, God is made known, and Christ is Risen. Risen indeed!

"God is with us in our passage to whatever comes after death, and does not abandon us."

Celebrating Life and Death
by Ken Frank, Missionary in Turkey

A Muslim friend and I were comparing cross-cultural notes. In Turkey, the date of someone's death is highly significant. More than 60 years after the death of Turkey's first president, the nation still stops whatever it is doing and stands at attention at the exact hour and minute he died. In the United States, the date of a person's birth seems very important. People ask about friends' birthdays, and those of great leaders and celebrities are commemorated.

Why do some people prefer to memorialize a person's birth and others the death date? I find it proper to celebrate a birth as a life being added to a community. And with Jesus' birth, God comes to humanity, as God comes to all of us when we receive new life.

I find it hard to speak of celebrating a death. For those who sense nothing beyond the visible, a death is simply the end and only life can be celebrated, but, as Christians, death is not the end of our story. What comes after death continues our journey with God, and so in faith we commemorate death as a time of passage, of change.

It is a common belief here in Turkey that the dead have claims on the living. They are to be prayed for, and their graves are to be visited regularly, because they, like us, are on their way to judgment, to meet their maker. Could we look at Jesus' death and resurrection this way? Could we see Jesus as someone who continues to have claims on us, and so in that sense is not dead? Then we are not our own; we may not do whatever we please with our lives, or with the lives of others. There is much more to come after death. Jesus' resurrection is also a promise that our trust and faith in God is truly founded. God is with us in our passage to whatever comes after death.

Relief to Resurrection
by Alan McCain, missionary in Turkey

Visiting the tent cities erected with ACT (Action by Churches Together, including the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) three months after the earthquake that devastated northwestern Turkey in August 1999, I was struck by how survivors living in those tents appreciated what had been done for them. I was immediately recognized as the "papaz" (priest); surrounded, welcomed, urged to visit various tents.

A father of three told me that, as they had shelter, food, water, electricity and their children were cared for, this was just this side of paradise (which made me wonder about their living conditions before the earthquake!). He kissed my hands and thanked me profusely. I attended to a couple of minor concerns and promised to come back (and drink more tea) soon. Frankly, I was not expecting such gratitude.

A tent in a compound near a communal bathroom and community mess hall is no permanent paradise. Can we provide these residents a source of hope for years to come? Post-traumatic shock stays with survivors for a long time, and those who are cared for are often idle.

The work following any relief effort is termed "capacity building" or "development." It seeks to enable those whose lives have been irrevocably changed to rebuild, and provides a forward focus. It is, in many ways, the greater challenge, like bringing up the baby after the pain and joy of the birthing is past. Now, seven months after the first earthquake, the relief efforts are wrapping up, and we are looking for ways to move beyond relief to assist in the building of new lives.

Moving from survival to salvation, from relief to resurrection, is the pilgrimage of the Christian. We are born anew every morning, to faith and hope, and in some sense each of us has a cataclysm from which we must recover, be relieved, and redeemed. In Christ, we are born again to a new and living hope.◆

HONDURAS REBUILDS

by Noémi Espinoza

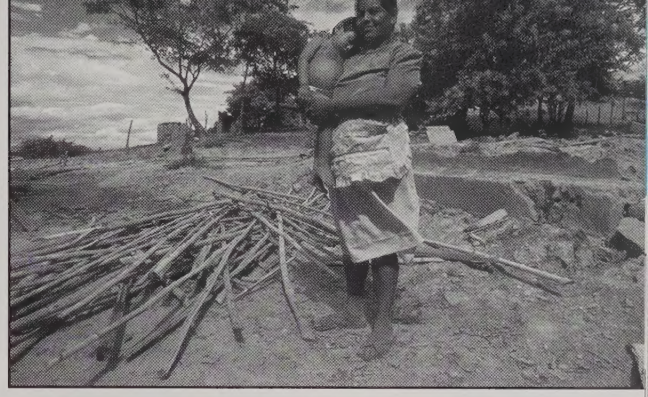
Noémi Ruth Madrid deEspinoza, an international partner board member of the Common Global Ministries Board, shares these reflections.

When Hurricane Mitch roared through Central America last year, it permanently changed the history of Honduras. We are not the same as we were before. Not only did the biggest storm in the modern history of our region alter the course of rivers and wipe away entire towns, forcing cartographers to design new maps of Honduras, Mitch also altered our political boundaries. It uncovered relationships of inequality and exploitation, forcing us to relate to each other in new ways. It encouraged new forms of solidarity amongst the people of our small country. In Honduras today, we speak of time as being divided between before Mitch and this post-Mitch time in which we live.

For Fidelina Lopez, with her two-year old grandson, José, the transition from one era to another was marked by the traumatic destruction of most of her village. Fidelina and most of her neighbors had to flee in a hurry as water rose around their homes and began to sweep away their dwellings, their animals, their crops, and their dreams.

It's essential that you understand that what Fidelina and José experienced was not a simple natural disaster. When the heavy rains fell for days on end, the people who died and whose homes were swept away were almost all poor. They were sisters and brothers forced to live in narrow ravines in the mountains, or who fled to the cities and built their shacks on river beds at the edge of industrial parks. When the rain fell, it was the poor who died.

It's important that when we look at Fidelina and little José, we refuse to see them as victims. For they don't see themselves that way. The Christian Commission for Development has worked for years with people in their village as part of our program of education and development. We have helped them organize and defend their land and we have helped them with material resources so that their crops could flourish, their animals thrive, their children blossom and their old people live with dignity. It's not surprising that when Hurricane Mitch struck their village with a vengeance, although they had to swim with their animals through the rising waters to safety, not one person in their village died. They had developed a resilience over the years as they've struggled. You made possible our ministry of nurturing the human spirit, so you also deserve credit for helping Fidelina and José to survive. On their behalf, thank you.



Fidelina Lopez and her 2-year old grandson José stand where her house used to stand before Mitch swept through her village, called 12 de Febrero, in southern Honduras near the Nicaraguan border.

We are in this together. We are the family of God; not the God of imperialism, but rather the God who, during Hurricane Mitch, was to be found suffering and dying in the neighborhoods and villages that washed away; who was present there with us in the mud the storm left behind. It is that God who has brought us safely this far, and that God who will lead us home, hand-in-hand, sister and brother, south and north, into a new heaven and earth where we shall each live in peace and unafraid. Amen.◆

Work teams are still needed to help rebuild Honduras and other Central American countries. To receive a brochure on how your congregation can help, email: dom@disciples.org

"We are in this together. We are the family of God..."

Global Partner Recognized for Work in Human Rights

A year after Hurricane Mitch left Honduras in ruins, the Christian Commission for Development (CCD), long-standing Global Ministries partner in the country, has received the 1999 National Human Rights Award from the government for their work with victims of the disaster.

In presenting the award, Honduras Human Rights Commissioner, Leo Valladares, said "I give thanks to God that we have CCD in Honduras, because during the crisis [of Hurricane Mitch] they put their organizational experience to work serving all people, especially the most needy and the excluded. You haven't just attended to the emergency, you've looked for lasting solutions, and have given hope to our people."

Noémi Espinoza, CCD's executive president, thanked relief agencies and churches around the world who support CCD's ministry, and "who recognize Christ in each woman and man who struggles for their rights and the rights of others." She said the award was "highly significant because it recognizes the ecumenical vision we have always defended, and because it reminds the churches that we should ratify and cultivate, day in and day out, our commitment and vocation with the poorest."◆

TFG

ime For God

Open wide your hearts to the world of mission

Youth are finding a place to serve with our overseas partners

During the summer of 1999, Holly Miller, a sophomore at American University and a member of Myerstown United Church of Christ in Pennsylania, discovered many life changing results from her volunteer experience with Woodstock School in Mussoorie, India. She went to India to tutor students in English. Holly says that having been in "the village of Mussoorie tucked away in the foothills of the Himalayas, [I] had the most incredible international Christian community I have ever experienced in my life." Not only did Holly make friends from around the world, she is now more determined to complete her Teaching English as a Second Language certificate. This mission experience helped her understand a little better what God is calling her to do in mission.

"I had the most incredible .... experience in my life"

There are a variety of opportunities for committed young Christians with Global Ministries. One program is called Time for God (TFG). Time for God is a volunteer program for young adults, ages 18-25, interested in church related or social service in the United Kingdom. TFG was estabilished over 30 years ago to give young people in the U.K. an introduction to local mission.

Over the past decade TFG has expanded in recruiting volunteers from around the world.

Applications are taken twice a year for placements that begin every September and January for 9-12-month terms. Global Ministries and TFG have limited funds available to assist volunteers with expenses such as food, housing, and travel. Once the candidates are selected, Global Ministries and TFG staff work one-on-one with the candidates to ensure the best placement. Retreats are planned three times a year to help volunteers deepen their faith, prepare them for their experience, and to connect them with other volunteers from around the world.

If you are between the age of 18-25 and you want to deepen your Christian faith while discovering a career which may be right for you, then Time for God may just be the answer.◆

There are many other volunteer mission opportunities available for youth and young adults. To receive a copy of Global Minsitries Service Opportunities for young people, please email: dom@disciples.org or write to: Mission Personnel Office, Global Ministries, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206

Missionaries Among Us!

Missionaries have a home assignment between terms of service during which they speak in churches and reconnect with their families. If you are interested in finding out if a missionary is available to come to your church please contact your region, conference, or the Missionary Relationship office.

The missionaries who are scheduled to be in North America between June and December 2000 are:
David and Karen Eubank, Thailand
Tim and Diane Weible, Japan
Helen Grant, Israel/Palestine
Robert and Nelda Thelin, Republic of South Africa
Salvador Martinez, Thailand
Daniel and Sandra Gourdet, Zimbabwe
Tim and Larry Colvin, Botswana
Nathan and Martha Knoll, Thailand
John Ferchak, Nepal
Jorge Bardeguez, Nicaragua

If you would like a missionary to visit your congregation, please contact the
Office for Missionary Relationships
P.O. Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 713-2571 or 713-2570
gsielert@dom.disciples.org
bmiller@dom.disciples.org

Chronicle

LOSSES TO THE FAMILY

Walter Anders, a member of the Common Global Ministries Board and the UCBWM, died December 31, 1999, in Miami, FL, at the age of 70. Anders was a charter member of the Church of the Open Door in Liberty City, FL, and active in the Florida Conference UCC. He served on the directorate of the Office for Church Life and Leadership, as a delegate to General Synod and as a member of the Synod Nominating Committee. He was a former teacher, counselor and public administrator. Anders is survived by his wife Erslyn, son Walter, daughter Nina Fields, brothers Richard and Robert, and their families.

Carl R. Dille, missionary in Angola for 30 years, died September 3, 1999, in Pleasant Hill, TN, at the age of 93. The Rev. and Mrs. Dille were appointed in 1938 to work with the Camundongo Church, Angola, in general evangelistic work and lay leadership training. From 1963-1967 Dille was principal and teacher at Emmanuel Theological Seminary, Dondi. He was also General Secretary of the Dondi Mission. Dille is survived by his wife Lois, two children, Nancy Dunbar and Thomas Dille, and their families.

Pauline King, missionary in India for 33 years, died January 19, 2000, in Huntington Station, NY, at the home of her daughter, Grace Ann Roberts, at the age of 82. King served as a flight nurse during World War II. She went to India in 1955 as a public health nurse at the Christian Medical College in Vellore, where she taught, treated the sick, started the children's ward, and delivered at least 30,000 babies. She helped deliver her first adopted child, whose biological mother died during childbirth. She raised twelve adopted children and began the Family Village Farm for orphaned children and destitute adults, which became part of the UCBWM Child Sponsorship Program. She is survived by her adopted children and their families.

Charolotte D. Webb, missionary in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, for 32 years, died December 21, 1999, in West Boylston, MA, at the age of 93. Mrs. Webb and her husband William were appointed missionaries of the American Board in 1941. A registered nurse, she taught health science at the Chikore secondary school and taught anatomy to student nurses at Mt. Silinda Hospital. The Webbs returned home in 1973. Mr. Webb died in 1989. Mrs. Webb is survived by three children and their families.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

Dr. Mabelle Arole
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Beck
Congregational Church
Norwell, MA
St. John's UCC
Archbold, OH
Martha Artopoeus
Otto F. Artopoeus
Rashad Burnley
Dorothy Lester
Roger Bishop
Barbara Kershner Daniel
Marion R. Daveson
Chester L. Wagstaf
M. P. Davis
Helen M. Davis
Ted Essebaggers
Mary K. Morris
Peter Gowing
Donald P. Gowing
Ralph Keithahn
Mary N. Keithahn
Gus B. King
Melvin G. Blase
Alton E. Loar
Robert W. Eilis
Laura Estella Murray
William H. Daniels
Frederick D. Shepard
Mary Alice Shepard
Robert Stieber
Southwest Conference UCC
David Trask
Southwest Conference UCC
Frank B. Rogers-Witte
Richard Walker
Martha C. Walker
Lynn Walters
Bruce BacCullagh
Margi Wildeberger
Robert G. Edmonds

GO AND DO LIKEWISE

***Robert Stieber**, missionary in Japan since 1971, died November 19, 1999, in Osaka, at the age of 53. Stieber first went to Japan as a mission intern in 1969. He returned in 1971 as a fully appointed missionary to teach English. It was when he moved to Osaka in 1968 that he began his involvement with church leadership development and devoted his passion, intellect, and energies to the Buraku Liberation Center. He is survived by his wife Naoko and their families.*

Robert Steiber

In a letter last fall, Bob begins by saying, "Japan is not a country where evangelism is easy or highly successful. Those of us who serve as international co-workers ("missionaries") with the small Christian population (Protestant and Catholic believers total about 0.8% of the population), are continually reminded of this fact when we look at the statistics for other areas, Korea, South India, Africa, etc." He goes on to say that rather than looking for reasons, the better question is "How do we do evangelism given this situation?" In answer to that question, he describes the small church where he had been co-pastor since its founding 7½ years ago, a church which even now has only 43 members, and that is somewhat above the average size for a Kyodan church.

The key is community participation by members. Bob writes, "during the first year, the church worshiped in a rented room as it planned for its own building. When that facility was completed, the members began to concentrate on membership building and community evangelism. As is typical in Japanese churches, a majority of the members were, and are, women. Most of them are, to translate from the Japanese, 'full-time homemakers.' We were all impressed by how much time these women spent in community activities. Several are active in community programs for elderly persons who are not living with other family. Hot lunches, shopping assistance and transportation are provided by these volunteers; some members also participate in visitation to elderly single persons. Many have recently lost a spouse or are facing illness, and a concerned listener is a welcome visitor. One newly baptized member began coming to church after expressing interest in Christianity to such a visitation volunteer. His faith has given him a positive outlook which is giving him strength and peace of mind in dealing with recently-discovered liver cancer."

"His faith has given him a positive outlook which is giving him strength."

"A number of women are involved in support activities for students from other countries who study Japanese at the national foreign language university near our church. Through them, our church has been introduced to students from many countries."

"Other women are active in support of city politicians. The opinions which they express in that setting about social and ethical concerns reflect their Christian faith and serve as a witness to other supporters. One city council member, whom several members support, has been in the forefront of activities to make Mino City more open to, and accepting of, foreign residents."

Might we live out this same commitment to evangelism in our own communities?◆

The 190th Annual Meeting of the United Church Board for World Ministries, October 28-31, 1999, marked the last meeting of the corporation. Jacqueline Smith, UCBWM President, signed the Articles of Incorporation amended to read Wider Church Ministries (a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ). The signing took place at the table around which the first five commissioners of the American Board held their first meeting, September 5, 1810, in the parlor of the Rev. Noah Porter, pastor at Farmington, CT.

Photo: Signing the Articles of Incorporation for Wider Church Ministries, Jacqueline Smith, UCBWM President. Watching (left to right): Dale Bishop, UCBWM Executive Vice President; David Hirano, immediate past Executive Vice President; Scott Libbey, former Executive Vice President; Richard Osterberg, UCBWM Legal Counsel.

The **Eyes to See** project was so popular in 1999 that this cooperative effort of the Boards for World and Homeland Ministries is being continued. Nearly new and used eyeglasses are needed by impoverished people around the world. We invite local churches to participate in this healing ministry. The first step is to request the **Eyes to See** information packet which has educational and worship resources along with details about packing and shipping the glasses. Contact: Patricia J. Goldberg, UCBHM, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 736-3799; goldberp@ucc.org

GLOBAL RESOURCES TO ORDER

NEW! Global Ministries Poster
Colorful bulletin board display or use as an interactive study piece with children and youth. (free)

2000-2001 Mission Personnel Directory Contains missionary photos and provides an up-to-date listing of missionary names, addresses, birthdays, and e-mail addresses. (free)

Friendship Press Mission Study Brochures Cuba or Indonesia (free)

A Day in the Life Youth Resource
This four unit resource will enable youth to experience something of what life is like for youth in other parts of the world. (free, companion video is available for a cost of $10.00)

GEAR
Global Education and Advocacy Resource to encourage and inform action on issues of justice worldwide. Published tri-annually ($6.00 yearly subscription or single complimentary copy)

To order resources please call United Church of Christ Resources at (800) 325-7061

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